

POINT

THE TOC H MAGAZINE

3

February 1998



TOC H

Bringing people together

POINT 3

Toc H is about people. Founded in 1915, Toc H fights to break down barriers by challenging individuals' preconceptions of others and the divisions which exist in society. While its work is based on Christian principles, all faiths and none are recognised and accepted.

Toc H works with people from all walks of life, tackling social problems such as loneliness, isolation and deprivation through an approach which focuses on self-help and taking responsibility for oneself and the local community.

Toc H uses the model of the compass to emphasise four personal challenges which are the inspiration for its membership. The Four Points of the Toc H Compass are:

1 Friendship: 'To Love Widely'

to 'welcome all in friendship'.

2 Service: 'To Build Bravely'

to 'give personal service'.

3 Fairmindedness: 'To Think Fairly'

to 'listen always to the views of others'.

4 The Kingdom of God: 'To Witness Humbly'

to 'acknowledge the spiritual nature of man'.

Point 3 is the magazine of Toc H, and derives its title from the third Point of the Toc H Compass. It acts as a vehicle for communication between staff and members, informing, encouraging and stimulating readers on topical and relevant issues. Contributions are welcome from any group or individual involved in Toc H.

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- A full copy of the current Editorial Policy is available on request from the Editor.
- The opinions expressed are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Editor or Toc H.
- While Point 3 is made available to all members and staff free of charge, a voluntary contribution towards the cost of production and mailing is welcomed.
- Printed on chlorine-free, environmentally friendly paper.

Cover Photo: Pantomime Season - see article on page 5. Photo courtesy of Huddersfield Family Album (archives.)

Toc H is an active Movement of people practising reconciliation by being open to all in friendship, offering service in the community, confronting intolerance and prejudice, and discovering a faith to live by. We bring the Toc H experience to as many people as possible to develop personal growth and build caring communities.

Registered Charity No. 211042



Dear Members and Friends

The newly elected Central Executive Committee met at Alison House on the first weekend of December. We had as always a packed agenda and I share with you some of the key points.

As usual, your Central Councillors have a full and detailed briefing, and I urge you to make contact with them to find out more.

- **Reviewing the year** - this was a main item on the agenda at which the CEC took the opportunity to consider reports covering all aspects of Toc H work and activities reflective of the financial year to date.
- **Looking to the future** - this was the second key item on our agenda, examining all the things that we need to be putting in place to ensure that Toc H, our Toc H, moves forward as an active and positive force for good in the future. I will be reporting more fully on both these items after the next CEC meeting in February.
- **Fundraising** - despite the considerable efforts of our divisional and central fundraising people, we have not been able to generate funds at the sort of level that we need to in order to bridge the financial gap in our accounts. I have therefore taken the opportunity to redirect our fundraising resources into what I believe will bring more positive results. Divisional Fundraising Officers will concentrate on developing Toc H Shops in each Division. Your Central Councillors have more information on this issue.
- **Germany** - I am pleased to tell you that we have secured the return of all those funds that were misappropriated from the Toc H accounts in Germany and this episode is now closed. All that remains are the final negotiations concerning the handover of stock to the organisations taking over the Toc H Centres.
- **Toc H Week** - A small group of Toc H Members supported by John Biggerstaff are masterminding this key event. This is your opportunity to put Toc H on the map in your area. You will soon be receiving a communication from the Toc H Week Planning Group to which I hope you will be able to respond positively.
- **Guest Membership** - a small group of CEC members are now examining how best to implement this initiative, following approval of the motion at Central Council (see November issue of Point 3).
- **Lindridge House** - following the resignation of David Ruddy, the South West Region is now seeking to appoint a new Warden for Lindridge House. If you know anyone who might be interested in this post, please contact Daphne Dawes (Chairer of the South West Region) either directly or through us at Central Services.
- **Director's presentation to Central Council** - this is now available on cassette tape and your Central Councillors have a copy.

I wish you all a happy, peaceful and fruitful New Year.

Mike Lyddiell

WORLD CHAIN OF LIGHT 1997 - ADELAIDE

As many readers will know, this year the World Chain of Light began in Adelaide, South Australia, starting as always on 11th December at 9pm. David Hall, Secretary of Toc H Australia, sent this report...

The last time the World Chain of Light started in Adelaide was in 1950, so we wanted to make the most of it. We had several objectives which, to varying degrees, were all realised:

- to increase understanding of the international nature of Toc H among Members in South Australia, particularly the more recent Members, providing information about where Toc H is working in the world and what is being achieved
- to involve as many Members as possible
- to take advantage of a rare opportunity for publicity about Toc H
- to provide an opportunity for some people outside the Movement to learn more about us.

The main function on the 11th was attended by more than 70 Members and friends. It culminated in the service and Grand Light, with close to a dozen lamps and rushlights involved, when His Excellency Sir Eric Neal, Governor of South Australia and Patron of Toc H in South Australia, lit the first lamp to start the Chain. Michael Thomas, National Treasurer, gave a short talk on Toc H which provided new insights for all -Members as well as guests. We received a total of 18 messages from overseas and around Australia which, together with additional information about Toc H in other countries gleaned from Point 3 and national magazines, made the passage of the Chain around the world more meaningful.

Members maintained the vigil throughout the 24 hours, generally in pairs, and were pleased when a new issue of



His Excellency Sir Eric Neal accepting a Toc H plaque from Area Commissioner, Andrew Cole.



Chairman Stephan Ptak, lights the eight lamps for Grand Light.

Point 3 arrived that day to provide some extra reading matter. We also arranged a barbecue tea on the 12th - mainly for younger Members - with a group staying on for the final Ceremony of Light at 9pm.

Toc H Branches throughout the country took advantage of Australia hosting the Chain to make the event a bit special. Reports have been received of Branches meeting for the service and Light in Hobart (Tasmania), Canberra, Kwinana (Western Australia), and several Branches in Queensland from Cairns in the far north, through Townsville to Bribie Island and the Brisbane area.

The publicity achieved was better than expected. The press release generated a snippet in several local papers, an interview on prime-time radio just before the morning news, and a 30-second spot as part of a main evening television news - with the camera panning over lighted lamps and an appropriate commentary.

Altogether a highly successful and memorable occasion.

continued ...



Members (some reading Point 3) involved in the vigil.



Cameraman and presenter prepare their coverage for Channel 10 news.

THE 1997 WORLD CHAIN OF LIGHT MESSAGE

Greetings from Toc H Members in South Australia to all other Members wherever you may be. Adelaide is perhaps the best planned of all Australian state capitals, with the city square being laid out in an orderly fashion, surrounded on all sides by a green belt containing botanic gardens, sports fields and the famous Adelaide Oval. The suburbs spread out beyond, being contained by the sea to the west and hills to the east.

Toc H began in all States of Australia in 1925 and its fortunes have been similar to those in other parts of the world. We became autonomous in 1970. A few years ago we realised the need to make Toc H the young persons' Movement it was in the beginning. We now have a variety of Branches, some with senior Members, some with younger, and some with a mixture.

Toc H in South Australia has five Branches in suburban Adelaide and one country Branch, with a total membership of about 170. At Victor Harbour, 50 miles south of Adelaide, where the country Branch is located, we have a camping facility with top-class dormitory accommodation for nearly 100 people. We run camps for disadvantaged and disabled children several times a year. These are virtually free to the children, thanks to volunteer staff and generous

donations. Toc H camps have been run every year since the mid-1930s. Many of the young people now involved in Toc H have been volunteer leaders at these camps. We have a Branch in a Secondary College and the student Members are involved in service activities to the local elderly, and in school or community projects - including a landcare project.

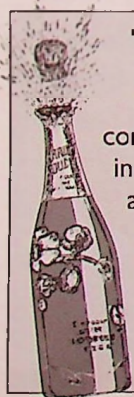
We are convinced that the need for Toc H is just as great now as it ever was and that we have something unique to offer. The task of rebuilding Toc H to anything like its former stature is an enormous one - especially in a TV/computer-oriented world where people are becoming increasingly insular and there are many organisations competing for volunteers and members.

As we conduct our vigil here in Adelaide and we pray for Toc H and its Members around the world with all the different challenges and circumstances in each country, would you pray for Toc H in Australia, that we maintain and pass on the Toc H spirit with enthusiasm and conviction.

We leave you with a passage from the letter to the Ephesians:- 'For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light. For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true' (Ephesians 5: v 8-9).

THEY MADE IT!

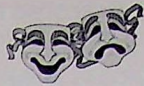
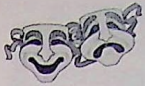
Mark and Steve have not only completed their challenge but have done it in style. On the 16th December they arrived in Barbados achieving no less than sixth place in the gruelling Atlantic Challenge rowing race. Greeted by their families at Port St Charles Marina, the lads had taken just 58 days to complete the 3,000-mile race.



Aboard the Toc H Phoenix they had encountered storms, huge waves, high winds, problems with their water pump, and most serious of all, a head wound sustained by Steve which required Mark to administer nine stitches.

While Mark and Steve now take a well deserved rest, Toc H staff and Members back in Dorset are organising a reception to mark their achievement. More on this, and a detailed account of the rowers' experiences while at sea, are planned for future issues of Point 3.

PANTOMIME SEASON



Surely no-one could be so old, or so tired, or so cynical that they cannot enjoy the panto. However highbrow one's normal tastes, it is good clean fun to cheer the handsome hero, hiss the villain, and chorus 'Oh no we don't!' at the right time. One may not especially enjoy seeing Frank Bruno as Buttons or other celebrities trying to be cute, but the age-old ritual of goodies and baddies has an enduring appeal... 'Oh yes it does!'

Why is it such fun? Partly, no doubt, because it gives adults permission to regress to childhood reactions - and childhood simplicity. Back then, Right was Right and Wrong was Wrong. We were allowed to believe the fairy tale, and yell in the right places.

At an adult level, pantomime links to a long tradition of myth and legend, peopled by fantastic heroes and fearful villains. These occur in every culture, and their appeal endures. Whether it is Ulysses resisting the Sirens, or David slaying Goliath, or any other legendary contest between good and evil, they all touch the same deep need to see good triumph over bad... and that's a very adult need too.

Another enjoyable bit of the pantomime season is the Man or Woman 'of the Year' competitions that appear, sometimes on radio, sometimes in newspapers. In late 1997 the 'Independent on Sunday' ran such a poll - and we found that Tony Blair and Mo Mowlam were the top heroes, and Jonathan Aitken the arch-villain, closely followed by (surprise, surprise) Neil Hamilton and Saddam Hussain. Runners-up in the list of male heroes were Martin Bell and Earl Spencer. Clare Short and Cherie Blair were the female runners-up.

All this is good, harmless fun - and most people don't take it too seriously. The problems come, however, when people get stuck into a pantomime view of life, and assume that real life is like that too. The spectacle of viewers sending wreaths when a TV character in a soap opera has died, is rather sad - but it becomes dangerous when they go on to believe that the real world can indeed be divided into shining heroes dressed in white, and hideous black-cloaked villains, with

fiendish laughs. The outpouring of grief after Princess Diana's death may have been genuine, but when it verged on becoming a chorus of 'Hurrah for lovely Diana' and therefore 'Boo to the horrid Royal Family', it moved beyond genuine grief into pantomime - and Diana's memory was cheapened by it.

The 'Hurrah/Boo' syndrome happens a lot these days - partly because the media find it attracts the audience. A recent example was a BBC Radio 5 discussion about football commentary. A referee was suggesting that many commentators were not up to date on the laws of the game and sometimes criticised referees for bad decisions which were in fact correct. When he suggested that there should be a referee available to the experts to avoid that sort of error, he was told 'Yes, but it wouldn't make good radio'. In other words, it is fun shouting 'Boo, ref!' and we do not much care whether it is unfair.

It occurs in more serious contexts too. One of these is child abuse. The abused child gets huge sympathy from our society - and rightly so. But when that same scarred child grows up a bit and abuses another innocent victim, he or she is suddenly a pariah, and we all boo...forgetting that the very action largely stemmed from the original injury. The abuser's history may not excuse the action, but an instant switch from murmurs of sympathy to the growl of the lynchmob is pantomime behaviour, and should be left behind in the theatre.

Part of the spin-off from a pantomime mentality is the belief that there IS, always, a villain lurking somewhere. So, whenever anything unacceptable or unhappy takes place, we ask 'who was to blame?' - and someone, somehow, has to be found for the role of villain - at best, because they have been negligent (for not having foreseen the eventuality) or at worst, for having caused it. Policemen, politicians, medics, social workers all do nicely as scapegoats. We seem to forget that genuine accidents DO still happen, that good people DO make mistakes, and things CAN go wrong without the devious manipulation of an evil villain.

So what's all this got to do with Toc H? The answer is that it has a lot to do with Toc H, because Members of Toc H are committed to the practice of Fairmindedness - and pantomime

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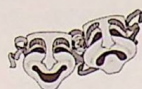
thinking is the enemy of that. In early versions of the Four Points of the Compass, Members were called upon to 'listen hospitably and humbly' to every person's story, and 'to help the truth to prevail'. The truth is seldom, if ever, served by suggesting any person is all good or all bad. Equally, that early version called on Members 'to find their own convictions, to influence the formation of public opinion, and thus to replace social and racial antagonisms by intelligent understanding'. If Members are to be true to that - and it is no small challenge - they must be prepared to challenge pantomime thinking, in themselves and others. They must do their bit to challenge simplistic stereotypes of bad and good, and argue for a more mature approach to people and problems.

As it happened in the 'Independent on

Sunday' poll, Tony Blair scored not only first as 'hero', but also fifth as 'villain'. Earl Spencer scored third as 'hero' and eighth as 'villain'. That is a more accurate reflection of real life - for we are all, in some ways, heroes and we are all, in other ways, villains. The trick is to encourage people to see both - in themselves and in all others - and if they try to do that they are practising Fairmindedness.

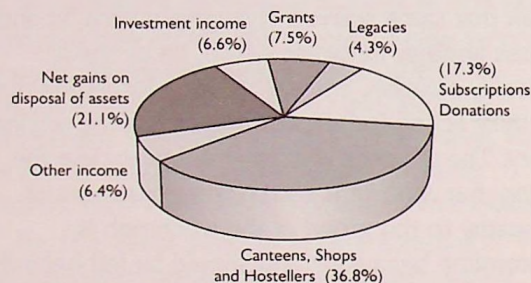
John Mitchell

Development Officer, Division 3



FINANCIAL REPORT 1996/97

INCOME - £2,154,363

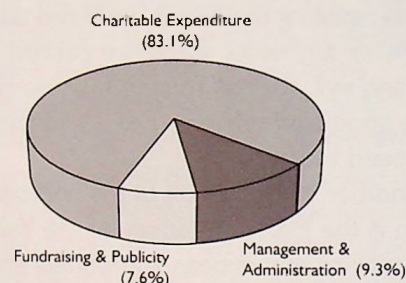


Toc H's full accounts for the financial year 1996/97 were approved by the Trustees in October and submitted to the Charity Commission in November last year. Here Jeremy Topham, Honorary Treasurer, summarises and comments on the report...

The year under review saw the financial effects of the implementation of Toc H's revised strategy. The final part of staff reductions and reallocations, the establishment of three staff teams, the creation of a significant professional fundraising arm were all achieved so that we could:

- refocus staff efforts to a voluntary membership/staff partnership
- develop new externally funded initiatives which meet the Toc H Criteria for Growth
- gain new and major sources of funds and sensibly eliminate the financial deficit in 1998.

EXPENDITURE - £2,512,163



Expenditure in this year of change was broadly as forecast. A slow build-up in new income and a disappointing year for legacies caused income to drop below target. Every effort is being made to maximise income and control expenditure to avoid too great a drain of reserves. Several properties, no longer needed for Toc H work, were sold during the year and the proceeds used to fund charitable work.

Most of Toc H work is carried out by volunteer Members and a high proportion of management and administrative expenditure is used to provide the umbrella and organisational services that are necessary for this to happen.

A copy of the full annual accounts is available upon request from John Matthews, Head of Finance & Properties at Central Services.

STILL LOOKING FOR A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?

It's February already and, if you are like me, all those New Year's resolutions will have been long forgotten. However if your conscience is still nagging you, may I help you make a belated resolution, and this time keep it?

Avid readers of Point 3 may remember in November 1995 an article entitled "Family at War" in which I recounted my experience of discovering that I had three great uncles killed in the Great War, and how I had found their graves. This kindled an interest in the history and geography of the Great War, and I offered to take parties to the Western Front to share my experience. The response was encouraging, and to date I have had the pleasure and privilege of taking over 60 Members and friends.

Each trip used the Hatfield-based Toc H minibus, and was focused for the most part on staying at Talbot House which provided an ideal base for touring the Ypres Salient. It also allowed easy access to Bruges, Brussels and the coast, as each party felt they needed a break from the heavy hearts experienced touring the Ypres battlefields. Some parties also visited the Somme for one or two nights, staying in a very comfortable farmhouse run by Avril Williams at Auchonvillers. Like Talbot House the welcome was always relaxed, informal and great fun, that is until first light when the cockerel started crowing!

In each party there was at least one person who wished to pay a personal pilgrimage to a specific cemetery or battlefield. I shall long remember our visit to Longeval Cemetery by Delville Wood on the Somme where Joe Higgins of Cambridge laid a wreath on his father's grave to the sound of the lament "Flowers of the Forest" played on bagpipes by Avril Williams's daughter, followed by a "Last Post" bugle call. I shall also remember John Hooper of Tetbury who wanted to retrace the route the Queen's Regiment followed in 1940 from the railway station at Abbeville, through

the town and out on the road to Amiens - John found the spot where he himself was captured, and subsequently spent the rest of the war as a POW.

My one surprise, and indeed disappointment, from meeting such a cross-section of Members from different Branches was just how few had been to Talbot House before. Perhaps having spent 36 years in the RAF I have an over-developed sense of duty, but I do feel all Members should visit the birthplace of our wonderful Movement. It is an experience you will not forget, and it is one you will want to repeat. With the advent of the Channel Tunnel, improved road connections both sides of the Channel, and an easy one-hour drive from Calais to Poperinge, it need not be an arduous or expensive trip and is well within the capability of most drivers.

So, now to this belated New Year's resolution. Why not be positive and plan a trip to Talbot House this year, which coincidentally is the 80th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice in November 1918? If you do not want the hassle of planning a trip, or are nervous of driving on the wrong side of the road, then do contact me for details as I will be running several trips this year to both Ypres and the Somme (see dates and itinerary overleaf). If you can put together a party so much the better - a maximum of 12 for comfort in the minibus.

Recently I was afforded the honour of being elected to the Talbot House Association, and my personal crusade will be to increase the usage of the Old House, as its livelihood depends on a regular income from visitors. Just as Lord Kitchener said "Your Country Needs You", just remember "Talbot House Needs You Also!" Happy New Year!

Roger Griffiths
Cambridge Branch

continued ...

GUIDED TOURS OF THE WESTERN FRONT

- 25th - 29th April
 - Ypres/Somme/Vimy Ridge
 - 2 nights Talbot House/2 nights Somme
- 12th - 16th May
 - Ypres Salient - day trip to Brugge
 - 4 nights at Talbot House
- 22nd - 26th June
 - Ypres/Somme/Vimy Ridge
 - 2 nights Talbot House/2 nights Somme

Personal Pilgrimages and Last Post ceremony at Menin Gate included on all trips, plus time for shopping!!

Please contact for full details and costs:

Wg. Cdr R H Griffiths (R'td)
Poppy Field Tours, 48 English Drove,
Thorney, Peterborough, PE6 OTJ
Tel: 01733 270766

BRIXWORTH MEETS ITS TARGET



Back in July '97, Point 3 reported on the progress at the Brixworth Countryside Access for All scheme and the funding necessary to make it a success. Megan and Harry Graham have now written with some good news to share...

"Some time ago the CEC were brave enough to underwrite the Brixworth scheme funding needs, as required by the Millennium Commission. Large donations were needed to reach this target of £200,000 in cash and kind and we have been quietly working to this end.

When the new landfill tax came into being and the Environmental Trust was set up we felt Brixworth would meet the criteria necessary to access some of their funds. Harry, County Council Officers, and the Chairman of SITA, the Environmental Trust for our area, met to discuss the scheme, and the details and options. The meeting went very well and it was accepted that we had a project worthy of funding. A letter has since been received stating that Brixworth has been awarded a landfill grant, and that we are to benefit to the tune of £132,000. This means that, coupled with Toc H volunteers' working time and cash already raised, the underwritten £200,000 is now covered. The money will be put towards woodlands, observation hides, a trail network, a minibus, and furnishing a residential centre.

We would like to thank Mike Lyddiard, Ian Pearce, Central Services, and also Division One for their help. It should be pointed out this initiative has been overseen by a small group of

unpaid volunteers who have given their time willingly. Andy Johnson, the Northamptonshire County Council Countryside for All officer, has been, and still is, a tremendous help and deserves a special thank-you. A special thank-you also to Sally Simms for her work. She has worked hard right from the beginning and spent many hours at Brixworth. Without her, our task would have been even greater. It must not be forgotten the valuable part the volunteers contribute and which must be continued up to the year 2000. All future Project weeks and weekends have still to be funded so we shall continue fundraising.

We are also grateful to all who have supported the ongoing tree appeal campaign. Thanks to publicity from Point 3 we have received donations and good wishes from Toc H Members and Branches from all over the country and we have made many friends through correspondence with people.

This has been a major initiative and will take Toc H to the Millennium. It is something that can be built on - possibly an expression of Toc H could be started at Brixworth. We are obviously delighted with news of the award."

The Tree Appeal will continue until the year 2000. If you would like to buy one or more trees (£1 each), perhaps as a living memory for family and friends, please contact Megan Graham, 7 Upper Park Avenue, Rushden, Northants, NN10 9NY. Cheques payable to Toc H Brixworth Project.

ACTION 4 TOC H - WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Faced with the challenge of regenerating Toc H, one could well ask the question "but where do we begin?" It would be quite easy to feel swamped by the enormity of the task. However, it might be less important *where* we begin, just so long as a beginning is made!

In an attempt to offer some direction to those Members willing and able to contribute to the development of the Movement, the Division One staff team have devised a programme entitled 'Action 4 Toc H'. The programme comprises a number of exercises which facilitate and enable the participants to understand the objectives of Toc H and plan activities towards the promotion and growth of the Movement. It is basically a planning process and, to use current jargon, is about 'capacity building'.

So what does it involve in practice? The initial programme was planned to run over a residential weekend and was piloted in the North East Region early in 1997. A slightly modified programme was then run in the Scottish Region in November (see report by George McKelvie). After an introductory session comprising of 'domestics', 'ice breakers' and a look at participants' expectations, the first main session considers Toc H, where we're coming from, the current situation and what we've got. This is typically done by an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of Toc H as the group sees them.

Next comes the action planning, or "where

we're going", which not only is a brainstorm of ideas but also includes consideration of resources and funding needs, and even an assessment of any personal skill needs. This is followed by a look at the first and subsequent steps towards achieving these action plans and is backed by an assurance of continuing staff support (if needed).

This is broadly what is contained with 'Action 4 Toc H' but is it successful? Here is just one outcome... Steve White, North East Regional Chairman and member of Bridlington Toc H Action Group, was a participant on the original event and was helped to formulate an action plan for a 'Twig', or young Branch. The basic idea was to involve young people under 16 in some Toc H activity to introduce them to the Movement and hopefully, in the fullness of time, involve them as volunteers and subsequently Members of Toc H in Bridlington. The 'Twig' was launched in the summer and has grown to over two dozen young Members. A very encouraging result indeed.

John Dunwell
Development Officer, Division 1

The next 'Action 4 Toc H' weekend is planned for 27th-29th March at a location near Leicester in the Mid East Region (although open to all). A briefer one-day programme is also to be presented to Cleveland District in February. For further details contact John Dunwell.

ACTION 4 TOC H IN TWEEDSMUIR

Toc H is not as well known in Scotland as it is in the rest of Britain and membership is dropping alarmingly. So this weekend was set up to help Scottish groups to organise more events in the 1998 calendar to attract new Members.

After dinner on Friday we had a short session to get to know each other and in doing this we realised that, in the room, we had collectively something like 70 years' experience of Toc H. On the Saturday we were joined by two other Members and we started a full day of

work. We spent our weekend looking at our year ahead. From Ayr, rising from the ashes of their terrible Branch Room fire and the very positive attitude of Margaret and Roger, came a commitment to new Branch premises, a loneliness group and a commitment to Toc H Week. From Denny, John and Jim B. came a pledge to continue their club that helps people with learning difficulties and to organise a Christian Aid collection.

From Glasgow/Paisley, Jim S. and I will organise, in collaboration with the Simon

continued ...

Community, a CAMEO to bring homeless people together and a two-week holiday taking senior citizens and people who live alone, and have difficulty in getting about, to the coast.

We also plan to bring the new **Toc H Action Together** in **Strathclyde** Group together with, hopefully, some new Members. On Christmas Day we hope to give out 100 Christmas Dinners to the homeless and needy in Paisley, thanks to the generosity of a restaurant in the town.



participants 'in action'.

This was a very valuable weekend which gave us a chance to plan for the future. All who took part felt the benefit of getting away to listen to each other's thoughts, problems and aspirations. I only wish other groups could have taken part - maybe next time. My thanks to John Dunwell and Roger Giles for organising a very useful, enjoyable weekend.

George McKelvie

T.H.A.T.S. Group

(Toc H Action Together in Strathclyde)

SNAPSHOTS

a flavour of Toc H events around the country

RUSHDEN ROYAL'S RUBY CELEBRATIONS

The current 24 Members of Rushden Royal Branch celebrated their 40th Birthday recently with a dinner. The following week a get-together was held of past and present Members, together with Members from the town's other Branches. Visitors travelled from Hull and Peterborough to join us. Three founder Members are still within the Branch and outlined activities over the past forty years, highlighting the Annual Springtime Ball held during the 70s and 80s which raised thousands of pounds for charity, and also the forty years of Sunday Services at Isebrook Hospital. Home made entertainment was remembered with much fun and laughter. Guest Speaker for the evening was Matthew Price of BBC Northampton, who spoke of how he applied his Christian faith to his job. A birthday cake made by a Member was cut over a glass of wine and the evening closed with prayers.



"We've been together now for forty years". Peggy Pack, Doreen Hughes, Mavis Sharpe, Gladys Cresswell (now of Peterborough) and Margaret Lawrence, who was the instigator of the Branch all those years ago, and still keeps her eye on us!

CENTRAL COUNCIL CHALLENGE ACHIEVED

At Central Council '96 Stuart Wroe challenged two Members from Division One - Alison & Richard Newby - to turn an idea they conceived over the Council weekend into a reality. One year on, at Central Council '97, the challenge had been met. Richard and Alison had not only set up a local fundraising group - HandER L.F.G - but had raised £300 to boot.



Richard & Alison presenting their donation towards Family Purse to Mike Lyddiard (left) and Stuart Wroe (centre left) while at Central Council.

CARNIVAL CAPERS

Buckingham Branch again entered a float in their town's Christmas Carnival Procession and to their delight won second prize. The float, dressed to the theme of 'Ding Dong Merrily On High' was seen by a crowd of around 6,000 local inhabitants. The Branch was assisted in the work by their newly formed 'Task Force' - a collection of local people who, though not keen to become Toc H Members will at the drop of a hat help out with projects. On this occasion they were involved in circulating collecting buckets, distributing sweets and decorating the float.



Photo credit: Buckingham Winslow Advertiser

A COUNTRY OUTING

The High Brooms Joint Branch recently held its Annual Old Folks Outing. Fifty elderly folk from High Brooms and the surrounding areas boarded the coach in high spirits. It was a lovely morning and what a lovely ride it was, through some of the most beautiful parts of Ashdown Forest, with its little villages dotted here and there. Soon we left the forest behind us and found ourselves in Newhaven, then along the coast up on to the Downs and Beachy Head. After a stop here for refreshment it was back on the coach along the lovely Eastbourne sea-front through to Bexhill. Here everyone was given an envelope containing £5 so that they could dine wherever they wished. After a wonderful afternoon in Bexhill we had another trip through the country back home. Once again it was good old Toc H. Another wonderful day.

Harry Mackellow
High Brooms Branch

ELMSTEAD MARKET BRANCH

The knitted Nativity group pictured here



has been passed on by Elmstead Market Branch to Market Field School, which has pupils with special needs. Although only a small act, this is what the Branch feels Toc H friendship is all about.

PARKHURST'S FESTIVE FUN

It was not the sound of firecrackers on November 5th but Christmas crackers when our Branch Members entertained 35 elderly housebound Newport citizens. We hired the Parish Church Hall for the afternoon and tables were laden with beautiful food and a welcome cup of tea. Everyone had a Christmas cracker and all guests were given a Christmas parcel before going home. The entertainment was given voluntarily by the Vectis Charity Entertainers.

Our Christmas Mini Market was also a huge success, despite the weather. Yes, it rained all day! A very warm welcome awaited our customers, who began queuing half an hour before opening time, many being regular customers who are used to our bargains. The tombola and raffle were as popular as ever, not to mention the lovely array of home-made cakes and handicrafts. There was a festive atmosphere with many members wearing Father Christmas hats.

Jackie Rammage
Parkhurst Women's Branch

FUN DAY

Jim Beveridge of Denny Branch was one of the organisers instrumental in a Fun Day which raised over £1,000 for local charities including the Toc H Handicapped Club. At the official presentation evening Jim was asked to give a talk on Toc H, and he duly obliged.

LETTERS

feedback from readers, members and those involved in Toc H

- I was most interested to read R. H JASPER'S letter in the November issue regarding elderly Branch Members, and, whilst accepting that a high average Branch age is not necessarily a measure of our success here in Cheltenham, I would contend that an inability to attract younger Members is not always a measure of failure. I certainly agree that, unless new blood is injected, an elderly Branch will almost certainly close sooner or later, but does the NEW blood always have to be YOUNG blood? I would argue that new ELDERLY blood is more necessary in an elderly Branch, since the generation gap there is often too large to be attractive to younger new Members. But there would seem to be no earthly reason why elderly new Members should not be just as welcome as younger ones. Over the last five or six years Cheltenham Branch has enrolled nine new provisional Members, all well over 70 years old. Of these, two have since lost interest, but five have subsequently been initiated into full membership. And during the last half of 1997 two more potential provisional Members have been attending regularly and showing a keen interest in the Movement. Recruitment has been largely by personal contact, and, although our Members of advanced age are rarely able to be involved in active corporate work, a wide range of individual jobs of service are performed (often in the name of Toc H), and, of course, every new Member provides the potential for an additional sum towards our Family Purse contribution!
- New young blood may be vital to WORK for Toc H, but new older blood is still important to sustain older Branches, where maintaining fellowship in the Toc H spirit is just as important a "job" as many other corporate activities.

Eric G Varley
Cheltenham

- I was somewhat bemused by John Dunwell's contribution in the November 'Point 3', which set me wondering why we need a new 'role model'. Surely, Tubby Clayton is, was and always will be, the inspiration/role model for Toc H in our work of service and fellowship in the community. To make Princess Diana a 'role model' smacks of 'jumping on the bandwagon' following her tragic death.

Dennis Till
Chard Branch

- Our Members have suggested that I write on behalf of Saltford Branch to Point 3 as a channel through which to share with fellow Members a programme idea which has proved to be very interesting and challenging for our small Branch.

Since its publication in 1995 we have been studying our National Chaplain's book, "A Charter for Living". It was our original intention to cover the book in the five autumn/winter months but so absorbed did we become in each of the topics covered by the book that it has taken far, far longer than that and we still feel that although we finished the book at our last meeting, we could really go back to it again ere long.

Alan Johnson's modern study of the four Points of the Toc H Compass proved a refreshing insight and provided much stimulation for our thinking and his weaving together of the Points into the Journey of Discovery in the penultimate chapter proved a reminder of the fact that none can stand on their own. His final chapter, in which we are reminded of the good humour and laughter which exist when Toc H folk get together, caused much self-examination before we could agree that modern Toc H still has the capacity to stir people to find fun in our fellowship and service - it doesn't have to all be serious.

We are only sorry that it has taken us so long to delve into the book and that this letter of encouragement to other Branches to use it as a tool for discussion is therefore a long time past the publication date. But we feel quite sure that there are further copies available at Wendover if people would like to do as we have done. We each purchased a copy and our discussions were led by our Pilot, but it would be quite possible for members of a Branch to take it in turns to do the advance reading and share initial thoughts - it doesn't take long before someone in the group feels motivated to question, challenge, agree, disagree or dare we suggest, take us slightly off the point!

We thoroughly recommend a fresh study of the four Points of the Compass through Alan Johnson's book "A Charter for Living".

Pamela Cheale
Saltford Branch

Copies of Alan's book are available from Central Services priced £2 (an additional charge of £1 is made to cover postage and packing).

We pay special tribute this month to Gerry Conibeer who died in December. Gerry, who until very recently was Honorary Treasurer, made a huge contribution to the Movement as outlined by two of his closest allies...

A man irrepressible with his ideas and enthusiasm...

I first met Gerry Conibeer at a Regional Treasurers' Conference. He was then South East Treasurer and already playing a big part on the Toc H national stage with very definite ideas on bookkeeping, budgeting, deficits, use of assets and all sorts of other things that sounded very much like black magic to me. He produced the Treasurers' Guide to explain things, and people like me went round Districts and Regions to spread the word. I soon came to realise that Gerry was not a one dimensional money-man but put his energy and talents to Branch work, participating in Projects, the Region, Council, the Executive, Project Groups, training and much else. He was irrepressible with his ideas and enthusiasm.

As Honorary Treasurer he further developed forecasting and budgeting and produced reams of paperwork to demonstrate every conceivable possibility. At times there was an obvious conflict in his mind between his enormous desire to see Toc H expand and succeed, and his need to be a prudent Treasurer - a balance he achieved with much heartache. He pored over his computer for untold hours to provide us with data, analysis, and ideas. Few people realised the effort involved. Then came the memos - all generated in Lotus 123, a subtle art practised by few!

When Gerry was reappointed at Central Council 1996, he was obviously ill and in distress. Little did we know that he would soon be diagnosed with the cancer that killed him. He became gravely ill but recovered sufficiently to return home and continue his interest in Toc H. He collated the 300-odd Branch returns, working an hour a day - the most he could manage. He read and responded to all the paperwork, and on the morning that we met the Auditors, last September, the senior partner greeted us by saying that Gerry had already been on the telephone to say his piece! Even in the December, despite difficulties with his speech, he was ringing up to offer ideas and advice for the CEC.

For all this, my abiding memory of Gerry will be of him buttoning his overcoat, putting on his cap, pushing his pipe and tobacco in his pocket, and with that smile on his face saying, "Well! Coming for a pint?"...I'll miss him.

Jeremy Topham

...and a constant source of encouragement, humour and optimism...

I first knew Gerry in the late seventies when he was a member of Tonbridge Branch and was closely involved with the Pageant of Motoring at Penshurst Place. After Gerry moved to Leatherhead, his new Branch and Sevenoaks Branch met in the chapel at London Airport for the start of the World Chain of Light. Before parting, Gerry had arranged for the two Branches to meet at a later date at a hostelry with a genuine skittle alley for the first of several light-hearted evenings.

Our close association really began in 1982 as Central Councillors and later as Members of the REC and some years later of the CEC. Gerry had become involved with financial matters quite early when Regions became responsible for their own accounts in 1983. Later in 1986, at a particularly difficult time, he became Regional Treasurer and in 1991 elected Honorary Treasurer. Gerry was

a constant source of novel ideas to add interest to formal and other regional meetings.

Both conveniently close to the M25 motorway, Gerry and I travelled together whenever possible. If due to meet on a Friday evening for the weekend we would make the most of the day, exploring new routes and venues for lunch. One year in September we toured the well-dressings in Derbyshire. At such week-end meetings Gerry, with a cheerful call and beaming smile, would often dispense early morning tea.

I came to know just how much time and effort Gerry expended on Toc H yet, despite his many commitments, he made time to become a Project volunteer and was always ready to respond in any way to help the Movement. Gerry was always mindful of the aims and ideals of Toc H and was a constant source of encouragement, humour and optimism and yet he also felt that Toc H should have a pronounced element of fun. Gerry became a close and helpful friend and confidant. I also came to know Gerry as a family man and the immediate future will be sad for Betty, Nicky and Gavin but I feel sure that they will come to recall happy memories of Gerry with great thankfulness as shall I.

John Cox



Every Member makes an invaluable, individual contribution to Toc H. In a regular feature, Point 3 acknowledges both those who are new to membership and those who sadly have passed on. In welcoming new Members, we hope to give you a flavour of the person behind the name by listing the 'hidden talents' individuals have told us about on their application forms. The Tributes and Farewells provide a limited opportunity to recognise the individual contributions made by those whose membership has sadly come to a close.

WELCOMES

- **Joseph Piper**, member of Buckingham Branch. Joseph's main interest is in people and cultures. He obtained a degree in Theology on his 73rd birthday and his previous occupations have included training officer and flight engineer.
- **Nancy Owen**, member of Cheltenham Branch.
- **Tom Owen**, member of Cheltenham Branch.
- **Bobby Gibbs**, member of Cirencester Branch. Bobby is a partially retired chartered surveyor, specialising in forestry.
- **Ian Oakman**, member of Gwynedd District.
- **Sally Ellis**, member of London District.
- **Andrew Snelling**, member of Regional Projects Group. Andrew enjoys cooking.
- **Alfred Simmonds**, member of South East Region.
- **Leonard Troman**, member of Solihull Branch.
- **Bernadette Calloway**, member of South Staffs & Wulfrun District.
- **Judith Farrell**, member of South Staffs & Wulfrun District. Judy is a childminder who lists a sense of humour and an ability to organise amongst her qualities.
- **Helen Baker**, member of Stockport District.
- **Wayne Hassall**, member of Stockport District.
- **Vicky Lea**, member of Stockport District.
- **Stanley Lewis**, member of Stockport District.
- **Elizabeth Rimmer**, member of Stockport District.
- **Shirley Stafford**, member of Stockport District. Shirley is a Treasurer for SCANS children's holidays.

TRIBUTES

- **Gladys Thompson** of Kempston Branch. Due to illness Gladys had been unable to get to Branch meetings for most of last year but continued to take an interest in the Branch and remained responsible for sending birthday cards to each member. Gladys had been our Pilot for a number of years and will be sadly missed by all. **JT**
- **Helen Spriggs** of Parkhurst Women's Branch. Helen found great comfort in Toc H, and always enjoyed our meetings. Helen was a very dear lady and will be sadly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family. **JR**
- **Hendrik Dequidt** member of Toc H Poperinge Branch. Hendrik was a good Member and English friends will miss him as a good pancake maker at times when we had open door days at Talbot House. We are going to miss him very much. **VD**
- **Phyllis Belding** member of Shirehampton Women's Branch. She was a member of the Branch for 50 years and held all the Branch Officer jobs except Treasurer. For the past three years of her life we have held our branch meetings in her flat, because her arthritis made it very difficult for her to attend our meetings in the local Methodist Church. **LS**
- **Edgar Watson** member of Wellingborough Men's Branch was a keen Member who gave whatever help and advice he could. He will be missed by his friends. We will remember him. **BE**
- **Gwen Brown** member of Mid Norfolk and Norwich District. Gwen suffered from multiple sclerosis and was the only surviving member from the first Toc H handicapped holiday at Hengrave Hall in 1976. She attended every year since and participated in many other Toc H holidays and activities. **AB**
- **Frank Miles** member of Mid Norfolk and Norwich District. He was a member of Hunstanton Men's and then the Joint Branch until their closure. **AB**
- **Helen Lilly** member of Nailsea Women's Branch. She was such a quiet lady, doing the work of our Programme Secretary over the past years with sincerity and love. We shall miss her in our Branch very much. **EB**
- **Ivor Godfrey** member of the Much Wenlock Branch. He was a kind and loving man. We are saddened at his passing. **CT**

- **Eunice Leening** member of Leeds Ladies' Branch for many years. She was Branch Treasurer for a number of years and we give thanks for her life and her faithful contribution to Toc H by the quality of her life and service. **MS**
- **Revd Richard Leslie Cole**, former member of Glamorgan District. Richard had been a Member since 1935 and latterly became a Builder. In recent years he made regular visits to Central Services to participate in morning Reflections until ill health prevented him from travelling.
- **Marion Scofield** member of Leicester Ladies' Branch. Marion died suddenly leaving not only our Branch but the local Church and the community shocked, for she was respected and loved by everyone for her quiet yet fierce determination to live her life witnessing for the Lord she loved. Within the Branch she held office as Chairman but Marion will be remembered for the way she "lived Toc H". She crossed barriers of race and religion, she was quick to defend, she volunteered herself to any task required and above all she had the unique quality of making each person she knew feel treasured by her. **GP**
- **Sister Irene Collins** member of Leicester Ladies' Branch. Irene will be missed by all the members of the Branch. She served the Movement well in her example of fairmindedness and an interest in everyone no matter what their background and need. Irene lived a life of simplicity and found joy in her service for others. **GP**

Lack of space on this month's page has restricted the number of tributes we are able to publish. Those omitted this month will appear in the next issue, space permitting.

FAREWELLS

- **Thomas Stones**, member of Wolds District.
- **Gladys Thompson**, member of Kempston Branch.
- **Florence Vicars**, member of Westham Branch.
- **Phyllis Belding**, member of Shirehampton Branch.
- **Gwendoline Brown**, member of Mid Norfolk District.
- **Richard Cole**, member of North Bucks/Oxford District.
- **William Hewitt**, member of Rhyl Branch.
- **James Littlewood**, member of Huddersfield District.
- **Billy Stanton**, member of Newton Abbot Branch.
- **Edgar Watson**, member of Wellingborough Branch.
- **Cecil Baylis**, member of Cheltenham Branch.
- **Mary Butcher**, member of Springfields District.
- **Gerald Conibeer**, member of Lyme Bay District.
- **Nellie Davies**, member of Newcastle (Staffs) Branch.
- **Nora Ellis**, member of Broadlands District.
- **Ethel Fitton**, member of Greenbank Branch.
- **T 'Ronald' Gatiss**, member of Falmouth Branch.
- **Ivor Godfrey**, member of Much Wenlock Branch.
- **Andrew Grieve**, member of Huddersfield District.
- **Helen Lilly**, member of Nailsea Branch.
- **Frank Miles**, member of Hunstanton Branch.
- **William Pledger**, member of Hemel Hempstead Branch.
- **Dora Preece**, member of Weymouth Branch.
- **Nancy Talbot**, member of Downend Branch.
- **Elsie Gentle**, member of Hatfield Branch.
- **Keith Saunders**, member of Selkirk Branch.
- **Godfrey Wharton**, member of Hemel Hempstead Branch.
- **Reginald White**, member of Seaford Branch.
- **William Gibson**, member of Calstock Branch.
- **Louise Holland**, member of South East Region.
- **Thomas Lovegrove**, member of Wellingborough Branch.
- **Eunice Leening**, member of Leeds Branch.
- **Joan Maddison**, member of Southampton Branch.
- **Henry Sammons**, member of Wivelshire District.
- **Marion Scofield**, member of Leicester Branch.

• ACCOMMODATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Members considering visiting South Africa may like to know that Toc H South Africa have recently purchased Rose Cottage in Johannesburg and are setting up a Bed and Breakfast facility. They also have a venue for small conferences holding up to eight people boardroom-style or 50 people seated cinema-style. Lunches and teas can be arranged.

For bookings or enquiries: P.O. Box 1551, Parklands 2121 Johannesburg - South Africa. Telephone: (011) 648-5724/7886876 or Fax: (011) 788-5651

• COVENANTS

Those Members covenanting their subscriptions through Branches who have been concerned at the cash loss to their local unit will be pleased to know that we can now respond to their needs. Using Inland Revenue guidance we are devising a form acceptable to them that Branch Treasurers can use to show proper payments of the covenanted sum. Final details are still being worked out but the form should be complete before the financial year-end.

• SOUTH EAST REGION MINI BUSES

The following vehicles are available for Projects and visits to the Old House:

- Leyland Daf 17-seater. Contact: Ann Mead, 36 Goddington Lane, Orpington, Kent. Tel: 01689 826349
- VW Diesel 16-seater, tail lift, wheelchair access. Contact: Jack Turner, 5 Canons Close, Wootton, Bedford. Tel: 01234 768410
- Ford Transit 9-12-seater. Contact: Doug Parker, 1 Links Drive, Totteridge, London N20 8QU. Tel: 0181 445 7755
- Ford Transit 16-seater. Contact: John Burgess, 66 Park Meadow, Hatfield, Herts. Tel: 01707 264949

The bad news is that having reviewed the administrative costs of handling covenants, we have recently come to the conclusion that covenants of less than £25 are uneconomic to process. Therefore, we will have to set that figure as the minimum for new covenants. For further information please contact the Finance & Properties Department at Central Services.

Jeremy Topham
Honorary Treasurer

WHAT'S ON

a guide to forthcoming Toc H events and opportunities

• "TELLING THE WORLD!" - A 24-HOUR WORKSHOP ON PUBLICITY

*28th - 29th March (lunch to lunch)
Prideaux House, London*

This workshop will look at how charities and community organisations, such as Toc H, can publicise themselves better. People not involved in Toc H will be warmly welcome as well as Toc H Members, and the content will be relevant to all. Speakers will include some media professionals. Cost: £20 per head and numbers are limited. To register, send £5 cheque (payable to Toc H) to John Mitchell, 94 Burcott Lane, Bierton, Aylesbury HP22 5AS.

• A CAMEO - "I USED TO BE A CHRISTIAN, BUT...."

*4th - 5th April (lunch to lunch)
Green Park Centre, Aston Clinton, Nr Aylesbury*

This CAMEO will bring together some people who are committed Christians, and others who, for various reasons, have moved away from their former convictions. It will explore the reasons why increasing numbers of people reject Christianity - and consider whether what people are rejecting is actually what Christians believe today. Cost: £20. To ensure a 'balance' of participants on this CAMEO there is a special application form available from John Mitchell, 94 Burcott Lane, Bierton, Aylesbury HP22 5AS.

• CONCERT BY NORTHAMPTON LIGHT ORCHESTRA WITH SOLOIST RACHEL BUTLER

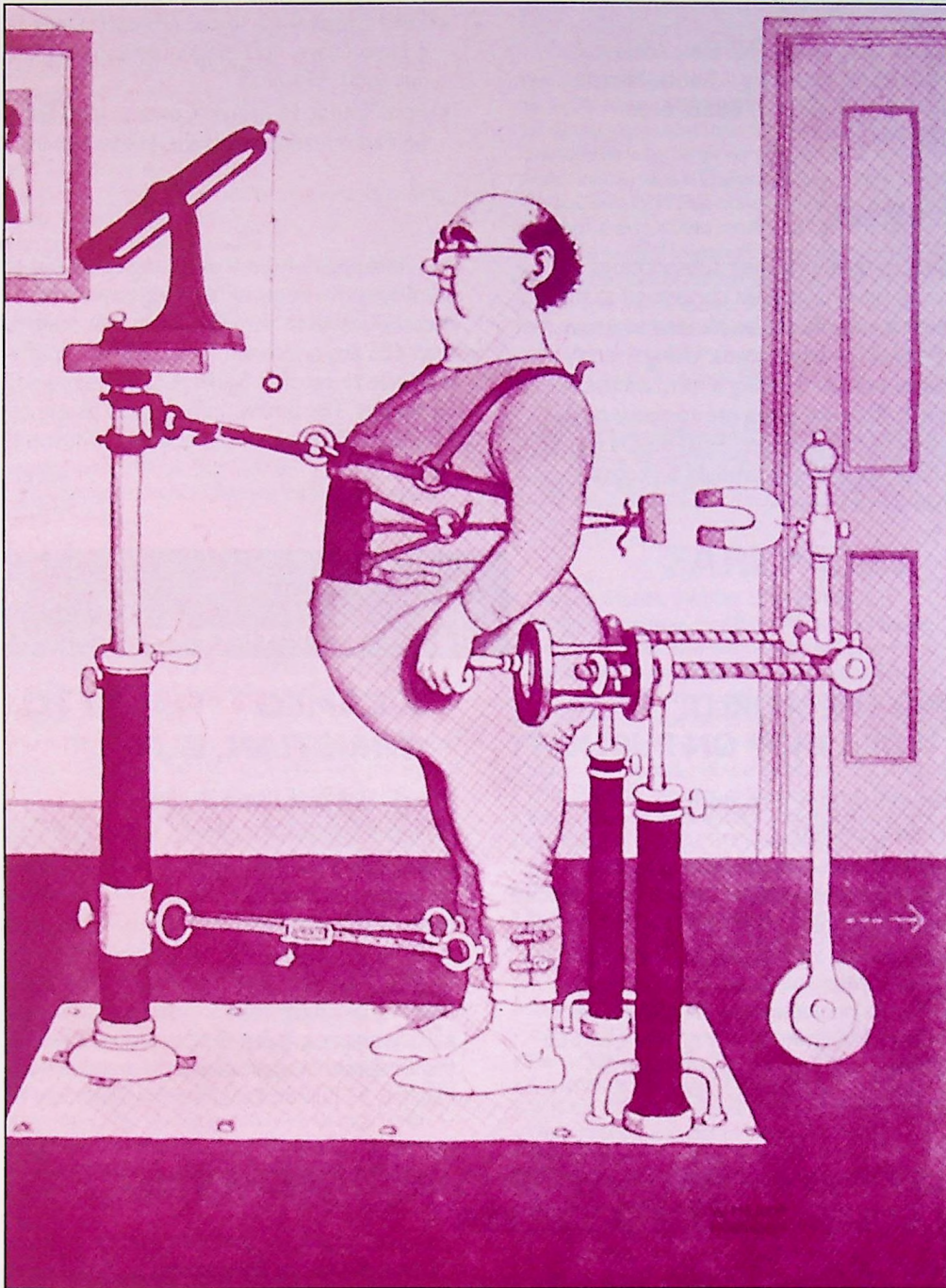
*14th March (7.30 pm)
Rushden*

This is the third concert the Northampton Light Orchestra have kindly given for Toc H. Their programme includes light classical music and is performed at a very professional level. Our soloist

Rachel enhances the evening as she has a beautiful voice, a lovely personality and has supported Toc H on many occasions. Tickets £4 including light refreshments. Proceeds go to the Toc H Brixworth Project. Contact Megan Graham, 7 Upper Park Avenue, Rushden NN10 9NY. Tel/Fax: 01933 356671.

If, like me, you are still struggling to shed those extra pounds gained over the festive season, you might take heart from the cartoon below. I found the drawing in the Toc H

Annual of 1978 entitled 'Gallant Adventure' - a rather pertinent title given the recent achievements of Mark and Steve in the Atlantic Challenge (see page 4). SC



A Convenient Magnetic Contraption (with mirror attachment) for Reducing the Figure. Recently placed on the Market. By W. Heath Robinson.